

Washington Update

July 15, 2004

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1. ComCARE Update Tracks Opportunities in Interoperable Emergency Communications

As a new benefit to ComCARE members and friends, ComCARE is tracking opportunities for funding and grants that may be of interest to many in the ComCARE community. The opportunities relate to ComCARE's mission of improving interoperable modern emergency communications and are emailed periodically to interested parties. For more information, contact Jen Minnich at jminnich@comcare.org.

2. NASEMSD Mentor Request Process and Forms Available

NASEMSD has launched a mentor request process. Parties requesting a mentor should return the forms to Stephen Hise (mentor process coordinator). He will send a broadcast email requesting a director with the desired expertise to serve as a mentor (not naming the requestor). The volunteer mentor and requestor will be notified when a match has been found. The request form is on the NASEMSD Web site (<http://www.nasemsd.org> <<http://www.nasemsd.org/>>). For additional information, contact Stephen Hise at stephenhise@cox.net.

3. HRSA Trauma-EMS Systems Stakeholder Meeting Scheduled

There will be a meeting of the HRSA Trauma-EMS Systems Stakeholders in Washington, D.C., on August 23-24, 2004. The goal for this meeting is to present information on current and future activities of the program and to solicit input. Among the anticipated agenda items are program initiatives to enhance State Trauma-EMS System capabilities; 2005 grant guidance; revision of the Trauma Systems Planning and Evaluation document (Model Trauma Plan); and standardization of Trauma Data Elements Project. Peg Trimble will represent NASEMSD at the meeting. Comments on the agenda items can be forwarded to Peg at mtrimble@state.pa.us.

4. Matt Anderson Left Position as EMS Director in Alaska

Matt Anderson on July 9, 2004, left the position of Manager of the EMS Unit in Alaska. He will be returning to school. The department is recruiting his successor and the job announcement (Health Program Manager III for the Department of Health and Social Services in Juneau) is posted on the "Workplace Alaska" section of the State of Alaska home page at <http://www.jobs.state.ak.us> <<http://www.jobs.state.ak.us/>> . Until the position is filled, the EMS program will be managed by Acting EMS Unit Manager Kathy McLeron, MICP. She can be contacted at Kathy_mcleron@health.state.ak.us or (907) 465-2262.

5. NASEMSD Becomes Supporting Organization for Vision Zero

Transportation systems today provide dramatic increases in our mobility and economy. As we combine emerging technologies with transportation systems, we can create truly intelligent systems to improve these benefits and make them safer, more secure, and more efficient. The Board of Directors of The Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITS America) has endorsed a new vision for surface transportation of the future. The Vision Zero sets the intelligent transportation goals of zero fatalities and zero delays. During the June 26-27, 2004, NASEMSD Mid-Year Meeting, NASEMSD signed on to Vision Zero as a supporting organization. Additional information on the program is available at <http://www.itsa.org> <<http://www.itsa.org/>> .

6. Hagel/Durbin Introduce Bill to Increase Public Health Workforce

U.S. Senators Chuck Hagel (R-NE) and Dick Durbin (D-IL) introduced on July 7, 2004, legislation aimed at increasing the pipeline of qualified public health workers at the federal, state and local levels. The Public Health Preparedness Workforce Development Act of 2004 (S. 2613) provides scholarships to students going into the public health field. It also encourages current employees to stay in the public health field by providing loan repayments in exchange for a commitment of a designated number of years of public health service. For a copy of the bill, visit <http://thomas.loc.gov> <<http://thomas.loc.gov/>> and query for bill number S. 2613.

7. NHTSA Seeks Input on Strategic Planning Activity

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) published a Federal Register notice on June 30, 2004, seeking input on its strategic planning activity. NHTSA welcomes comments, suggestions and recommendations that will assist the agency in assessing and understanding the potential effects and implications that changes in demographic, economic, environmental,

institutional and technological factors will have on motor vehicle and traffic safety. The information gathered will assist the agency in shaping its future vision, mission and goals, serving as the centerpiece by which countermeasures, programs and policies are developed and incorporated into NHTSA's 2005-2010 strategic plan. To view the information and questions posed regarding Docket No. NHTSA-2004-17794 (Long Range Strategic Planning), visit <http://dms.dot.gov> <<http://dms.dot.gov/>> and follow the instructions for submitting comments on the electronic DOT docket. Questions should be directed to Jane.Dion@nhtsa.dot.gov.

8. USDA Announces \$100 Million to Assist Rural Emergency Responders

On July 6, 2004, Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced that \$100 million is committed for a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) First Responder Initiative to support rural emergency responder efforts by prioritizing the financing for needed equipment and services. As part of the USDA's First Responder Initiative, a minimum of one dollar of every five dollars of fiscal year 2004 community facility funding available will be dedicated to first responder-type requests. USDA Rural Development provides financing of a variety of community facilities, such as: libraries, courthouses, fire and rescue facilities and equipment, police and emergency vehicles and services, and other community-focused facilities and services. The initiative will prioritize at least \$100 million to specifically strengthen the ability of rural communities to respond to local emergencies. A list of awards is located at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rd/newsroom/2004/firstresponders2004list.html>.

9. National Rural EMS & Trauma Technical Assistance Center Launches Web Site

The Rural EMS & Trauma Technical Assistance Center (REMSTTAC) funded by the federal Office of Rural Health Policy, launched a Web site in early July. The Web site lists funding and grant opportunities, training materials and resources, and news and events. It will be expanded. Visit the Web site at <http://www.ruralhealth.hrsa.gov/ruralems/>.

10. CAAS Announces a Revision of Its Gold Standards for Ambulance Accreditation

The CAAS Board of Directors unanimously approved a 2004 revision of its standards for ambulance accreditation. Under review since 2002, the CAAS Standards, Version 2.4, now include a mechanism to accredit ground Inter-Facility Transport (IFT) and Specialty Care Transport (SCT) agencies. During the revision process, multiple areas in the overall standards that required refinement also were identified, and these ideas were incorporated as well as other minor revisions that had been recommended. New and reaccrediting agencies will have the obligation of applying the new standards, as appropriate, for any application submissions made after June 1, 2005. For more information, contact Meredith Hellestrae at meredithh@tcag.com.

11. FEMA Joins NIOSH in Study of Ambulance and Emergency Vehicle Accidents

On June 30, 2004, the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced that it is joining the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in an ongoing study of ambulance and emergency medical vehicles crash data. The NIOSH Evaluation of Emergency Services Vehicle Occupant Safety Project involves the review of data on

ambulance crash statistics, hazard identification and task analysis, determination of appropriate crash testing methodologies, development of occupant restraint systems, and modeling of ambulance crash scenarios. NIOSH expects to complete the analysis by the fall of 2004. More information about this research initiative as well as other emergency vehicle projects is available at <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/inside-usfa/research/safety/vehicle.shtm>.

12. DHS Assists Emergency Responders with New Internet Course on NIMS

The Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announced a new online course that will help first responders understand the concepts and principles underlying the new National Incident Management System (NIMS) and to begin incorporating NIMS into their own planning and policies. To streamline coordination at the federal, state, and local levels, President Bush directed the creation of NIMS, a newly developed, standardized incident management approach to emergency incidents. The training experts at Homeland Security's Emergency Management Institute (EMI) created the online course, which takes about three hours to complete. The course can be found at <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWEB/IS/is700.asp>.

13. DHS Approves Use of Preparedness Funds for First Responder Training Courses

The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness (SLGCP), in cooperation with the Department's United States Fire Administration (USFA), announced on July 9, 2004, the approval of additional preparedness training courses for emergency responders. The newly approved courses, offered by USFA and the National Fire Academy, include Introduction to Unified Command for Multi-Agency and Catastrophic Incidents, All Hazards Incident Management, and Command and General Staff Functions in the Incident Command System. With this approval, states and urban areas can use allocated Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) and Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) funding to conduct or attend these courses. For more information, visit <http://www.usfa.fema.gov> <<http://www.usfa.fema.gov>> .

14. New Homeland Security Operations Center Serves as Primary Hub for Information Sharing and Domestic Incident Management

On July 8, 2004, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) stood up a new state-of-the-art Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC) to serve as the primary, national-level nerve center for real-time threat monitoring, domestic incident management, and vertical and horizontal information sharing efforts. Operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 356 days a year, the HSOC provides situational awareness and monitoring of the homeland, coordinates incidents and response activities, and issues advisories and bulletins to homeland security partners as well as specific protective and counter measure guidance. For more information, visit http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/interapp/press_release/press_release_0456.xml for a fact sheet.

15. New Report on Homeland Security Threat Advisory System Released by GAO

On July 12, 2004, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) released a report

entitled Homeland Security Communication Protocols and Risk Communication Principles Can Assist in Refining the Advisory System. This report examines the Homeland Security Advisory System and the cost borne by federal, state, and local governments due to changes in the threat level. In its report, the GAO concludes that warnings should include specific information about the nature and location of a threat and timely notification to allow for early and open information sharing. GAO also states that without this specific threat information, federal agencies, states, and localities may not be able to determine risk levels and appropriate corresponding protective measures. The report may be viewed by visiting the House of Representatives Homeland Security Committee Web site at www.homelandsecurity.house.gov <<http://www.homelandsecurity.house.gov/>> .

16. AHRQ Makes Access to Hospital Data Easier

The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality has redesigned its interactive HCUPnet software tool (available on the Internet at <http://www.ahrq.gov/hcupnet/>) to make it easier to obtain hospital care trend data for the nation and for individual states. The data represent 90 percent of all hospital stays in the United States and are drawn from 36 states. HCUPnet's databases include statistics on the conditions for which patients were hospitalized, the diagnostic and surgical procedures they underwent, patient death rates, hospital charges, hospital costs, length of stay, and other aspects of inpatient care.

17. Expert Disaster Preparedness Guide Released

Talking About Disaster: Guide for Standard Messages, a free-of-charge guide produced by the top 20 disaster preparedness organizations in the United States has been released. With a goal of providing current, accurate information on various types of disasters to the public, this version replaces the first edition published in May 1999. The guide provides the latest information and messaging on disaster preparedness and safety in the United States. It includes standardized safety messages on nineteen natural, technological, and human-induced hazards, as well as general disaster preparedness and safety topics. The guide is available from the Web site of the National Disaster Education Coalition (NDEC) at <http://www.disastereducation.org> <<http://www.disastereducation.org/>> .

18. CDC Releases West Nile Virus Activity Information

According to a report in the July 9, 2004, MMWR, a total of 21 human cases of West Nile virus (WNV) illness were reported from two states (Arizona and California) between June 30-July 6, 2004. During 2004, eight states have reported a total of 78 human cases of WNV illness to CDC. Of these, 57 were reported from Arizona. Forty-seven of the 78 cases occurred in males; the median age of patients was 53 years; the dates of illness onset ranged from April 23 to June 28; and one case was fatal. The report is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5326a5.htm>. Additional information about national WNV activity is available from CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm> and <http://westnilemaps.usgs.gov> <<http://westnilemaps.usgs.gov/>> .

19. National Response Plan to Include OSHA Involvement

The Bush Administration has expanded the role of the Occupational Safety and

Health Administration (OSHA) within the National Response Plan (NRP), according to Inside OSHA. The NRP, scheduled to be released by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) later this month, will include OSHA in the command system that oversees emergency responses, according to John Ferris, a special assistant for emergency preparedness at OSHA.

20. Nurse Hero Nominations Deadline July 30

The American Red Cross and Nursing Spectrum will recognize ten nurse heroes from across the United States as part of their ongoing commitment to recognize nurses' achievements. The nominee must have saved or attempted to save a life under adverse conditions. The event must not have been part of his or her defined work duties and must have occurred between May 2, 2002, and May 2, 2004. Nominations must be received by July 30, 2004, and will not be accepted by email or fax. For more information, contact Cynthia Vlasich, RN, at cvlasich@nursingspectrum.com <<mailto:cvlasich@nursingspectrum.com>> .

21. Upcoming Events (denotes event is newly added)**

American Ambulance Associations Summer Healthcare Reimbursement and Risk Management Conference, July 21-24, 2004, Marriott Boston Copley Place Hotel, Boston, Mass. Information is available at <http://www.the-aaa.org/>.

Commission on Accreditation of Ambulance Services Summer 2004 Accreditation Seminar, July 24, 2004, Marriott Boston Copley Place Hotel, Boston, Mass. Information is available at <http://www.caas.org/>.

Ready! The Emergency Preparedness and Response Conference & Exposition, July 28-29, 2004, Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C. Information is available at <http://www.readyusainfo.com>.

National Association of EMS Educators 9th Annual Educational Symposium and Trade Show, Sept. 7-12, 2004, Hollywood Renaissance, Los Angeles, Calif. Information is available at <http://www.naemse.org/symposium>.

**Conference on Emergency Preparedness for People with Disabilities, Sept. 22-24, 2004, Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Arlington, Va. Information is available at <http://www.nod.org> <<http://www.nod.org>> .

The 2004 Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) Annual Meeting: "Highway Safety - Priority 1.0", Sept. 25-29, 2004, Hilton Hawaiian Village, Honolulu, Hawaii. Information is available at <http://www.ghsa.org>.

ASTHO 2004 Annual Meeting: "Communication, Cooperation, Coordination - Building Bridges in Public Health", Sept. 28-Oct. 1, 2004, St. Paul, Minn. Information is available at <http://www.astho.org/>.

Drive for Live, 2004 MADD National Conference, Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 2004, Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center, Grapevine, Texas. Information is available at <http://www.madd.org/>.

**Air Medical Transport Conference, Oct. 25-27, 2004, Cincinnati Convention Center, Cincinnati, Ohio. Information is available at <http://www.aams.org/amt2004.html> <<http://www.madd.org/>> .

**"Collaboration: The Key to Success in Emergency Management," 2004 International Association of Emergency Managers Annual Meeting, Nov. 5-11, 2004, Adams Mark, Dallas, Texas. Information is available at

<http://www.iaem.com> <<http://www.iaem.com/>> .

4th Global Homeland Security Conference & Expo - Protecting the Nation's
Critical Infrastructure and Key Assets, Nov. 22-23, 2004, Hyatt Regency
Crystal City, Arlington, VA. Information is available at

<http://www.protectinfrastructure.com> <<http://www.protectinfrastructure.com/>> .